

# LOYALTY

Drawings by: H. Howland

By ROY NORTON

Being the third of a series of stories, based on truth, of those who refused to surrender.

**D**ECLAMATORY, insistent, cynical, the voice of the youngest man came through the darkness of the tropical night to the little group of wanderers seated on the veranda, "Patriotism? Flag worship! Old foggy idea! What is a flag, after all? A mere piece of bunting for which wise men hire fools to fight!"

The white-haired, scarred, lame old engineer, the Major, suddenly leaned forward, gurgled queerly as if about to speak with disturbing emphasis, got slowly to his feet, restrained himself, and then with an attitude of repression bent forward and looked at those around him expectantly. The half-caste club steward, swarthy, straight-haired, who had been dozing, hastened forward; then, receiving no orders, slipped quietly back into the shadows. Somewhere off in the jungle behind this outpost, founded by adventurers, and maintained by adventurers who came and went in a never-ending stream, a bell bird struck his mellow note, sounding like the ghostly, admonitory reminder of an ancient mission bell. Great fireflies swept and wove through the palpitant darkness, and still no one defended a flag. It was as if they, adventurers, exiles from civilization, were without allegiance.

The Major moved restlessly, then spoke as if with effort, his gentle voice sounding husky and reluctant. "At the risk of being called an old foggy by our companion, Gentlemen, I should like to tell about—well, about a man I once knew who lost respect for the flag of his country."

He blurted the last words, fighting habitual reticence. Those who knew him only as the distinguished engineer brought out by the Brazilian government to inspect a proposed undertaking, turned toward him with interest. A grim old rubber explorer smiled to himself with satisfaction, and the youngest man twisted in his seat as if intolerant of argument; but the Major did not glance in his direction.

"It's the story of Wild Bob Drake. And wild he was, and reckless, impulsive and unrestrained, all of which is a bad combination. From first to last these characteristics dominated him, drove him, finished him!"

The impatient young man rose with the evident intention of leaving; but the Major looked up and said in the same quiet tone:

"Don't go just yet, Mr. Rodney. I'd rather like you to hear this story. It's—well, in a way, I'm telling it to you."

"You sit down, young man!" growled the rubber explorer, deftly jerking Rodney's coat tails and thrusting a chair forward. As the younger man dropped to his seat a veteran orchid hunter hitched his chair closer and laid a hand on Rodney's knee with no very gentle pressure.

"Have manners!" he rumbled. "Pay respect to your betters!"

**O**VERAWED, the young man attempted a jest; but no one laughed. The Major, as if intent on performing a duty, ignored the interruption and doggedly resumed.

"About Wild Bob Drake—I got to know him at West Point. Strange place you might think for a man who had contempt for our flag. Don't make a mistake, however, because above all else one learns at the Point a veneration and reverence for the banner. No—that is badly expressed; for every American has that reverence somewhere in his soul, and West Point merely accentuates it.

"Drake came from what was then the Territory of New Mexico. I remember his first appearance very well, as he came striding across the campus with a peculiarly free swing of his lithe, active body, and a peculiarly fearless, unabashed look in his eyes, which, staring from his sun-tanned face, seemed lighter in color than they really were. Somehow, young as I was, but a few years his senior, he reminded me of a falcon, untamed, untamable. He had a singular lack of deference—or should I say proportion? He had no respect for authority if it did not agree with his ideas of how it should be exercised, and in addressing a superior quite frequently forgot or disdained to use title or salute.

He chafed at restrictions, and endured drill only because he wanted to know how it should be done. He had not been there a week before he was in open conflict, rebellious, disappointed, and obstinate. He was a natural fighter, and all his boyhood and youth had been passed in such totally independent environments that he could not understand and would not submit to what he regarded as mere imposition.

"There was but one feature that saved him prompt dismissal, and that was his exceptional interest and ability in his studies. He plunged into these as he did into everything else, recklessly eager. He made few friends and many enemies. But few ever understood him, and in scarcely any time at all no one cared to. He was justly called Wild Bob: not as wildness is generally understood, but because he was like some superb animal of the wild, unconquerable, born to freedom, chafing at all restraint either physical or mental.

"Well, for nearly two years the authorities patiently endeavored to form him, until for an act of insubordination that could not possibly be overlooked or condoned he was expelled. Those who witnessed his departure saw him stand on the campus, and heard him when,

wild with temper, he cursed the academy, its officers, and last of all our country's flag. His disgrace had made him a rebel, and as a rebel he disappeared from our midst and our knowledge.

**T**HERE is a post down in Arizona where white visitors are scarce. I was there one evening, many years after the Point, when many of its memories had been left far behind. A pack outfit came to the post, and there was something familiar about the man who loitered in the rear when his companions applied for water and food. It was not until the burros were headed over toward the far side of the camp that I took much notice of this diffident stranger. Then something in his walk, some turn of his head, spurred my memory, and impulsively I shouted, "Bob! Wild Bob!"

"The man turned and scowled at me, started as if to walk away, and then, recognizing me, came back almost defiantly. He had been unable to resist the temptation to speak to someone who had been friendly to him in that rather ignominious past. Before he had time to protest I had taken him to my quarters.

"He was so swaddled in reticence, or shame, or thought,



"Fifty hours on that gridiron began to tell on even their iron endurance."



that it was not until late that evening, when we sat out on the porch in front of my quarters, and the post was quiet and still, that he told me anything of himself, and even then he spoke in broken, disjointed sentences. I gathered that he was a failure; that his hatred of restraint and discipline had dogged his life like some inner Nemesis of the spirit that forever drove him to do the unwise and the reckless thing. He was not complaining, but embittered. Once he lapsed into silence and pilowed his gaunt chin on his breast and peered fixedly into the darkness, and to arouse him I told him something of my own tame and hard-worked career.

"I suppose," he said, "that you'll live to retire from the service, and then settle down to the economies of an underpaid officer who has devoted his life to—the service?"

"Even then I was contemplating my resignation to accept a civilian position offered me because of some government work I had done. I told him so.

"Quite right," he assented. "Nothing in the profession. War would be inglorious and advancement slow. Patriotism is rubbish. Pap fed to fools by those who, in any event, would never fight! Nothing to it. One flag's as good as another. Country's owned by a few millionaires and— Beg pardon, Ward! I forgot that you are one of the patriots." He ended with a sneer, laughed harshly, then got to his feet with a yawn, and I was not sorry that he thus expressed a desire to retire. I regretted having made him my guest.

"I tried to be civil to him when he left next morning, and somehow was saddened by his presence at my breakfast table; torn, as it were, among admiration, dislike, and pity for him: in him was so much of brilliance and outspoken vigor and genuine courage gone to waste. He rode away at the tail end of his bedraggled outfit, after waving me goodbye without a backward look.

**I** THOUGHT it most probable that I had seen and heard the last of him, Wild Bob, the man who had failed; but I was quite mistaken, for after that unexpected meeting his name came to me frequently, and mostly always connected with some reckless exploit. Once we heard of him as the leader of an unsavory, hard-riding gang that fought for pay at the behest of one of those little mining wars that used to rage throughout the northern border of Mexico, and again he was involved in the cattle war, where rustlers and owners slew without mercy. I don't think he ever descended to stage robbery. His was not a fight for gain. What his boiling soul craved was excitement. Perhaps he had grown old enough to regret, and to wish to forget.

"Then we heard that he had disappeared, supposedly in Mexico, and doubtless there were many who hoped that such a firebrand would never come back to flash its way along the already disturbed border.

"I was to hear of him once more. And I give you the story as it came to me from a wounded miner, a dying Indian, and the evidence I gathered with my own eyes.

**I**N the spring of a certain year he appeared in a very remote part of Mexico, at the Casa del Oro mine, where the arrival of a white man would be noted with curiosity. I have a mental picture of him from one of those who saw him as he came, a footsore, desperately tired wreck who fell repeatedly as he advanced and caused one who saw him to say, 'That chap's got too much mescal aboard,' at which a laugh went up from those who saw in such intoxication something ridiculous, fit for a jest. The stumbling man came nearer, still falling at intervals, until one of the three white overlords of the mine, attracted by the laughter, paused, shaded his eyes, watched, and suddenly swore aloud.

"Drunk? Drunk, you fools? Not by a whole lot! That is someone who is nearly dead!" and promptly ran down the long sloping side of the hill and out to the man, who was now on his knees after a longer interval of rest, and attempting to drag himself forward, almost like a wounded snake. Black and dry was the tongue that protruded from his bleeding lips, and hoarse, dry croakings, incoherent words, his attempt at speech.

"White too!" roared the rescuer (whose name, by the way, I give in truth as Patton). And then, being a forceful sort of exile, this man Patton shouldered what was left of Wild Bob and carried him to his own quarters, where for sometime Death

tugged at the adventurer's soul. But his splendid strength won out, and slowly he recovered. He had little to say for himself, or where he had been, or why, and in a country where much was taken for granted and a man's past regarded as purely his own private property, to be concealed or confided as he chose, it scarcely affected his standing with his rescuers. He was accepted as a peculiarly reticent man, who desired to be left alone in a sort of solitary peace. Those who worked with him came to regard him as the quietest, most docile of men. He accepted orders from the mining superintendent in silence, obeyed them punctiliously, and with seeming small effort got the work from the peons, Indians, halfbreeds, and riffraff under him. Patton confessed to me that the wanderer was the only white man around the property who never touched liquor in any form. He did kindly acts for his fellows in an unassuming way, but could be decisive when need arose. He had neither hobbies nor fancies, and volunteered no advice. He seemed brooding, forever brooding.

"He was like a man without an opinion," said Patton. "Never objected, assented, or suggested anything in the seventeen months before it all came to an end."

"And that doesn't sound like Wild Bob, who flagrantly objected to instruction at the Point.

**S**HUT in by their mountains and sands, marooned, as it were, from the whole world, these men received mail or held intercourse with the outside but once in four or five months; so, when the borderland began to whisper that the great Mexican Republic had fallen into the hands of politicians and schemers, that murder might be done for power, and that the clouds of Fate were ominous, it is no wonder that the news did not reach them.

"Imagine then the surprise that those white men felt one morning when they awoke to find themselves confronted by an army of nondescript, ragged, swarthy, dust-coated men with arms. The placid pot of peace was disturbed and seething in an instant.

They found out that Mexico was in revolt, and that this band of patriots had swooped down on the property to exact from it all the gold, all the money, all the supplies, on hand. The mine manager stammered and sweated, and threw out his hands in a fit of exasperation, and Patton saved an outburst, which would certainly have robbed them of any chance of escape, by grinding his boot heel on the manager's toe, and speaking rapidly to drown his exclamations. It wasn't a time for expostulation; for already, outside the office, they heard bawling shouts for the revolution, *vivas* for the

liberator, and all that sort of patriotic, inflammable frenzy that characterizes a Latin uprising. They could distinguish voices of their own men who had enthusiastically joined the revolt.

**T**HEY were struggling to find words to delay this confiscation, when Wild Bob came through the door and was made aware of the situation. It was his turn, and, signaling to Patton to let him have his way, he saluted the Captain who had come with the demand, and paid that flattered brigand as much deference as if he was the President of Mexico in person. Patton laughed when he quoted the conversation, which he declared he could never forget.

"We are not exactly with your cause heart and soul," said Wild Bob, bowing very deeply, "but have no doubt whatever of the well known honesty and truthfulness of the renowned Señor General Vasquez who commands you. It is a pleasure to submit to a man of such famed chivalry, a true son and true patriot of your glorious Republic."

"The Captain congratulated Bob on his judgment, thanked him in the name of the renowned leader for his compliments, assured him that there never was such a soul of honor in the glories of war, and wanted to know when he could begin to carry away the pelf.

"Of course," Bob asked, "your General will give us a receipt for the amount of stuff he takes, so that when your glorious revolution succeeds we can be reimbursed from the state funds?"

"Nothing is easier for a revolutionist than a promise. If his cause fails, of course he can't pay. If it wins, maybe he pays, and most likely he doesn't. So the Captain gave his promise.

"Then," added Bob, "you will have to give us time to check up our stuff, which we will deliver to your leader in person. The bullion will be easy because it is in the old tower there; but the supplies will have to be inventoried."

"Patton said that he and the manager narrowly avoided giving the whole pretext away, because they knew that all the gold cleaned up was even then within ten feet of where they talked, and that the old stone tower referred to contained nothing but dynamite, caps, fuse, and some small amounts of varied and mostly obsolete ammunition, together with all modern arms and ammunition they had. The mine management had walled in the windows to make the tower fireproof, and constructed double fireproof doors of old boiler plate; for a few tons of dynamite are unpleasant neighbors in a camp where there are many ignorant and careless miners.

"The revolutionists agreed to submit the proffer to their leader, and departed, leaving one man on guard outside the door.

**I**MEDIATELY afterward a withered old Indian called José, who had formed a violent liking for Bob, gained the room, and whispered to him that he had learned there was a troop of American cavalry within a day's ride, at a place called El Cajon. So they decided to send word to the troops and delay delivery of the gold until help arrived.

"Three of them buried the treasure beneath the flags of an adjoining room and swept the dust back into the cracks, while the fourth kept an eye on the sentry at the door. Patton, who looked like a Mexican and spoke the language as fluently as his own, and one other were to disguise themselves as best they could and escape at once for the trip to Cajon. They got out of the cabin by the back way, even while the sentry stood at the front door and the crowd of half drunken miners ran riot along the campstreet.

"It must have been rather a nervous time, that. The old native said Wild Bob sang and whistled to make a noise, that outside the rabble shouted and yelled, and that he watched and listened, expecting every minute to hear an alarm telling them that Patton and his companion had been discovered.

"Thus they waited for a long time. The sentry outside the door walked backward and forward, his bare feet spitting on the hard earth, and now and then he yawned with a noise like a tired dog. They heard two other insurgents join him, and they listened beside the door while these men talked of atrocities committed by their redoubtable leader. Also they learned that he was in a very

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## LOYALTY

bad temper, and that his particular hatred and malice were centered on all the 'cursed Gringos' and their hirelings. There wasn't much in that conversation to make them more cheerful or optimistic; but Wild Bob grinned, showing his strong, white teeth and winking now and then at his Indian admirer, who squatted on his hams beside the door lintel.

"The insurrecto Captain returned at last, and they knew by his face that part of their hopes could be discounted. He curtly informed Wild Bob and the mine manager that he had orders to take the loot. 'Unconditional surrender,' he said bombastically, swelling his chest, 'is what the illustrious General demands.'

"Does that include ourselves also?" questioned Wild Bob and the manager in the same words.

"They were told abruptly that it did, and from what they had heard could forecast their fate if they permitted themselves to fall into the hands of that blackguard Vasquez. The two white men looked at each other doubtfully, and then in a sudden burst of almost childish anger the manager of the mine seized from a shelf where it lay in a roll a United States flag, and leaped through the door to a flagpole that stood almost in front of the office. This action was all that was necessary to cause an explosion. The Captain, without a word, jerked a rifle from the hands of one of his men and shot. The mine manager fell, twisted, and rolled over on his back.

"Wild Bob, with a terrific oath, wrenched the rifle from the officer's hands, reversed it, and plunged the bayonet through the latter's abdomen with such desperate quickness that before the man at the foot of the flagstaff had stopped twitching the revolutionist who had shot him was dying, and everything in the room, also the street, was in a turmoil. It was this which doubtless saved the adventurer in the crisis, for as he ran toward the fallen manager others swarmed in so quickly that the insurrectos dared not shoot lest they kill their own men.

BOB saw at a glance the futility of trying to do anything for a man already dead, seized the flag, and with long strides ran for the dynamite storehouse, fumbling for his keys as he went. Behind him, faithful 'o the last, ran that poor, despised old Indian; though Bob begged him to desert, and cursed him for a fool. Lead began to patter around them as they reached the tower, striking the stone wall with little spats of gray dust, and against the steel doors, whence it rebounded savagely. It seemed that the fugitives might not last to untasten the doors. Shouts, shots, running feet, curses, exclamations, and the excitement of a blood chase increased before they swung the outer one open. It was fortunate that the inner one was unlocked; otherwise the end would have been speedy. The Indian was now on the ground, and Bob paused to drag him inside before he slammed the door.

"Even as he pushed the bolts home the butts of muskets thumped on the outer steel and the voices swelled to a roar. He locked the inner door, barred it, and examined the old man's wound, which, though not serious, was bleeding. Outside the sounds of hammering increased, and, hastily telling José to bathe from one of the barrels that were constantly kept in a corner for fire emergencies, he seized a rifle and ran up the worn stone stairs that led in a spiral to the roof of the magazine. From this vantage, leaning over one of the old stone embrasures, he opened fire with such deadly effect that the revolutionists broke for cover, leaving two or three of their men on the ground.

"Sometimes I wonder why he utilized the brief lull that followed in the way he did. I leave it to you. He bound together, bayonet to breech, two of the old muskets, attached the flag to his improvised staff, and planted it on top of his fort. The Indian, who had crawled up after him, says he saluted it when it was raised.

"José," he said, 'she's a good old flag. Once she goes up, she never comes down. Men die to make that rule good. Damn that Casa del Oro! They can have it. But they don't get this—the rag!'

"The parapet on top was about four feet high. They sat with their backs to it, and Wild Bob bandaged the old Indian's shoulder, swearing at him affectionately for remaining steadfast, and sometimes saying 'Whew!' when the bullets whined as the flag over their heads was used for a target. Then the firing stopped, and cautiously they peered out from the corners. The body of the mine manager still lay where it had

fallen on its back, and the sun beat down on it mercilessly. Wild Bob swore when he saw it, steadily, doggedly, cursing everything from the Captain who had done the murder upward to General Vasquez and the Mexican flag. Then he seemed to be pondering something, and rendered apprehensive by the continued lull. Off at the mill they could hear the sound of axes, and the tearing of timbers, and it was the Indian who suggested the meaning.

"They make from the big timbers, Señor Roberto, a ram with which the door to batter down. From other timbers they make the roof so that they not shot may be as they come. *Madre de Dios!* We live not long."

"Don't, eh, my José?" replied the adventurer. And then, 'Bet a peso you've guessed it; but we'll try to fool 'em'.

"He dived down the old stone steps and returned with a box of dynamite. He made another trip and brought up discarded, rusted old powder canisters that had been abandoned in the rubbish of the tower when the Mexican ownership ceased. He brought up nails, and scraps of iron, and old useless ammunition, and calmly sat there in the shade of the parapet and manufactured huge things in the nature of hand grenades, — hand grenades for the hand of a giant, so cumbersome were they, and so primitive. He whistled as he worked, did this strange white man, so the Indian asserted, and now and then paused to listen, or to peer out through screens he had hastily thrust into the embrasures.

FOR knowledge he had not long to wait, inasmuch as by four o'clock in the afternoon the enemies' engine was perfected, and the firing renewed.

"They saw that Vasquez himself had come to superintend the operations, and for a long time, grim faced and determined, the American lay with a rifle in his hand watching him, and heedless of the others.

"I'll get him if ever he gets careless and comes twenty yards this way," he said over and over to that poor, faithful old man who lay in the shade of the wall, twisting and biting his lips to suppress his groans. "Then if we go out, José, we'll at least know we took him along. That's something!" And after that he swore very terribly, so the Indian said, so much so that he, lying there expecting nothing but death, prayed for the soul of Wild Bob and the intercession of Our Lady.

"Finally the dreaded implement of war came into sight from round the corner of a building. It was a great framework of timbers mounted on the running gear of a wagon, beneath which men stalked, forcing it forward. Cumbersome it appeared, and unwieldy; but it seemed that beneath such a shelter men might break the rocks from round the doors and gain admission. After that life would be measured by seconds.

"The adventurer sat down and laughed, and rolled from side to side in great glee. The Indian stopped mumbling prayers, thinking that his revered master had gone mad from the heat, and crawled painfully down the steps for a fresh supply of water from the barrels. When he returned he started back alarmed; for beneath the magazine they could hear the creaking, straining wheels, the cheers of the men forcing it, and now there burst a terrific fusillade sweeping the air above them and spattering against the stones outside. The señor was lighting a very short fuse in one of his grenades with fingers that did not tremble, and still laughing as if at some impending joke.

"Look! Look, José! Watch below!" he said, and obediently the latter peeked downward.

"The moving barricade with its storming party had crept up the little hill on which the tower stood, and already those beneath were shouting derisive taunts at the white man above.

THEN a swift shadow leaped into being on the stone roof of the tower as the adventurer stood erect and with his great strength threw one of his missiles far outward. He had lighted another, and yet another, that sputtered by his feet, and José was terrified by the short, spiteful fuse. There was a terrific roar, as if the heavens had fallen outside. The tower seemed to shake as if in an earthquake. Screaming missiles whined and shrilled through the air. Cries and groans came from below, and, forgetting the fascination of those sparkling lengths of white, the Indian looked.

"The wagon and timbers were gone, and here and there huge splinters rained down-

ward on those who, too frightened and astonished to run, looked around them. Others lay on the ground, some quietly, many doubling and twisting convulsively, even as the manager had doubled and twisted when he fell. As if too astonished to continue, the firing from those over by the mine houses had ceased; but that was not all.

"The señor, shouting victory and defiance at the top of his voice, was throwing those other queer things he had manufactured, and there were other explosions, with clouds of dust, and shrieking pieces of metal and deadly shocks, and when the air cleared there was no man to be seen in flight. All those who had advanced under that huge screen of timber had fallen. Yes, there they lay, most of them quiet, and gruesome, and very still.

"José, horrified, dropped to his knees and began saying the prayers for the dead and dying, when he heard the señor scramble for a rifle, and saw him aiming it steadily, exultantly. Out in front of one of the buildings, shrieking at his men, and calling down vengeance on everything under the heavens, ran the illustrious General Vasquez. The rifle in Wild Bob's hands snapped. General Vasquez had ventured too far, and was now on the ground, a figure of blue with much gold braid. The figure got to its knees, and José heard the click of a breech block and the word 'Pshaw!' from Wild Bob.

"For the love of God, Señor!" expostulated the poor old man. 'Have mercy!' but even as he spoke the rifle snapped again, and the crawling figure ceased crawling.

"Even then, so barbarous is the flame of battle, the white man said, 'I'll throw a couple more slugs into that cur to make sure,' and did! Three men rushed out to drag it to safety. Three times the American fired, and now there were three others beside the General. Wild Bob cheered like a madman and stood up and waved his rifle until from every quarter lead flew at him; but so deadly had been his defense that when the sun went down, and the pitying dusk crept over the purple mountaintops to blanket everything, — the idle mine, the smokeless chimneys, and the ruined tower, — the blue-clad figures still lay there as they had fallen, contorted, disheveled, still. None dared approach them.

"Fires blazed up in a discreet circle around them, and in the flare could be seen another officer now swaggering in command. Ringed in was the old chunk of masonry, standing there like a grim, desperate warrior at bay, looming black against the stars. Hell broke loose in the distance, — the ribald shouts of men, the screams of women, the occasional discharge of firearms and drunken shouts. A bodega which the mining company had tried in vain to suppress had been looted, and those who rifled it had broached kegs of aguardiente.

"Up on top of the tower the Indian slept, perhaps half-delirious, awakening now and then invariably to see the crouching figure of the white man, rifle in hand, and more of those fearsome, dark objects of destruction he had manufactured scattered about his feet. The night brought with it a faint, chill breeze which now and then gained strength to whip outward, flapping the folds of the riddled flag on the parapet. Sometimes when José looked the American, silhouetted against the distant flare, seemed watching it, as if thinking vastly of something left behind. Once in the night the mestizo was awakened by the sound of firing, and knew that the revolutionists had attempted to encroach on the tower and had been driven back by the white man's vigilance.

THE sun came up, and after the chill of night they suffered from the increasing heat. They drank much water, and were hungry. José pleaded with Wild Bob to sleep for awhile and let him watch, and the white man with haggard eyes smiled at him, and declined, until at last he yielded to his sole supporter's importunities. Then after a few hours there was another attack from all sides, the new General driving his men forward, and again the hand grenades were thrown, and both men on the roof fired till the barrels of their rifles grew hot, and many men below were shot, and the new General raved until Wild Bob picked him off.

"This created another lull, and the enemy withdrew, presumably to promote another man to leadership. Advancement seemed swift and sure in the face of Wild Bob's marksmanship, and for the rest of that day the new commander contented himself by keeping up such a constant fire at the embrasures from all sides that it was unsafe to watch. The sun was their most pitiless enemy, and they made shift to prop a piece of canvas up with old rifles, beneath which shelter, for another spell, the American



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slept, while the constant whine of bullets sang above them or thumped against the outside of their defense. He awoke at dusk and peered out. Then suddenly he fell to the stones, and for a time José thought he was dead; but a long wound across his cheek, through his ear and edge of his scalp, showed that he had been no more than grazed, and after a time, with his handkerchief bound round his head, he was again courting death by glancing out at intervals. Their hunger increased, and José suffered another flesh wound when crossing to the stairway for a fresh supply of cartridges with which to reload the row of rifles that littered the space around them.

"Another night settled down over them. The fires were not lighted, which they accepted as an ominous sign. They talked of trying to escape, and the señor begged his follower to make the attempt; but José would not, obstinately refusing.

"Wild Bob busied himself with a can of oil and some old rags he found, and José, despite his efforts to keep awake, went to sleep, to be awakened by a flare in his face, and then the sounds of a heavy explosion. The white man had lighted some of his flares and thrown them wide, to discover that under cover of darkness the Mexicans were preparing to pile huge heaps of wood and timber round the foot of the tower for the purpose of smothering them out, or attacking through a screen of smoke. Again the hand grenades had been thrown, and in the dim light both the Indian and the white man fired at anything that could be seen moving. After that, alarmed by the persistentadroitness of the new rebel chief, they dared not sleep until dawn. And so began the second day.

FIFTY hours without food, up there on that gridiron, and drinking stale water, began to tell on even their iron endurance. The white man became careless, and was shot through the left shoulder. He went into a fit of rage, and for hours fired at anyone who came within scant range, and many cartridges were wasted on impossible distances. He began to talk at intervals, and sometimes he hummed tunes, and sang in an aimless way, very terrifying to the stolid, patient old man, who watched and listened.

"José, Old Hoss," he said once, "if Patton or Shepherd got through, our boys won't wait to come. They're Americans, off up there. They won't let even a pair of poor worthless devils like us be shot down or tortured like dogs without doing their best. It isn't in the breed. They'll come for the flag, if nothing else. They won't let it be defiled. I tell you they won't!"

"And then after an interval he began to hum again, snatches of old songs, pausing now and then painfully to count the hours that must elapse before relief could reach them. His faith that up there to the northward were Americans who would not let their flag or a countryman suffer was sublime. Once the Indian voiced a doubt, but was sternly silenced.

"None of that!" shouted the white man, scowling at him. "You ought to know better! They'll come! They've got to! It's for the flag—for the honor of the flag, I tell you!" and José dared say no more as the hours dragged through afternoon and evening, and his own hope dwindled, and he stoically counted the beads of his rosary and prepared his soul for its departure.

"All through the third night, weak, half delirious, yet watchful, they strained their ears for hopeful sounds; but none came. That they had been unmolested made them apprehensive. Even the iron faith of the adventurer was wavering when the dawn came. Buzzards, birds of ill omen, soared above them in the hot morning air.

ALMOST leisurely the day's operations opened as laughing Mexicans again surrounded them and began the incessant firing. At nine o'clock in the morning it stopped, and one came with a flag of truce.

"Pay no heed, Señor Roberto! It is a trick," implored José, who was now so weak that he could scarcely lift himself to an embrasure to look; but the American laughed and waved a wisp of cloth aloft to show that he accepted the parley. Old José still begged him not to expose himself; but the señor was mad. He must have been mad! José with feeble, trembling hands clutched a rifle from the stones and crawled painfully up to an opening facing the approaching envoy. With great effort he got it up and with far greater effort sighted it.

"What do you want?" shouted the American.

"The General Castillo will spare your lives if you surrender," was the response.

"But the flag? Do we take our flag with us?" demanded Wild Bob.

"The envoy pretended that he could not hear, and cupped his hand to his ear, and

shouted, 'What? Stand up and talk. I can't hear you.'

"Even as José warned him Wild Bob straightened up. Instantly the air was torn with a storm of lead, shrieking as if in malvolent ecstasy. José's trembling finger stiffened for one last shot, and the truce bearer who, with a shout of glee at his success, had doubled down and started to run, paid for his treachery. Again wounded, the Indian rolled over on his side. On the stones crawled the man who had once decided the flag. To the Indian, who saw everything through a mist of pain, he appeared to make many efforts to reach that riddled emblem of his country's faith and honor, and then slowly to draw it down. Weakly he loosened it, weakly he buried his face in its shot-torn folds, and weakly he thrust it to rest against his breast. Then, said José, he turned his eyes toward him, his faithful follower, smiled, tried to speak, coughed pitifully with a harsh, choking sound, and lay very still, appearing to stare at the sun—the sun whose pitiless, white-hot flame no longer hurt his eyes."

THE Major paused, his quiet voice sounding for the instant as if smothered. He made pretense to clear his throat, and threw his second cigar out over the veranda rail.

"We found them that way," he said, still more quietly, "the dead American who gave loyalty to his flag, and the dying old Indian, who gave loyalty to his friend. I like to think that perhaps God was kind enough at the very last to waft to Wild Bob's deafening ears the sound of our coming, that he might know that his faith in his countrymen had not been misplaced, that the flag he had so valiantly defended would remain undefiled. It may be so; for on his grim, haggard, dead face there was a faint smile, either of irony or of victory. I think it was the latter; because after all his misspent life, all his recklessness, all his cynicism, he had come to this honorable end. And honorably we buried him up there beside the tower, wrapping round him and his companion alike, as a noble winding sheet, the flag they had so ably defended."

Suddenly the Major turned in his chair, and leaned far forward toward Rodney, who sprang back as if ashamed of thus being brought to attention.

"A little while ago," said the Major very softly and very tolerantly, "you called it a piece of bunting for which fools fight. May God make us all, in time of our country's need, fools, such fools as Wild Bob!"

The club steward, who had come noiselessly out on the veranda, speculated for a long time afterward as to what could have caused the Señor Rodney, the young, the impetuous, to break in his speech while uttering what sounded like a profound and penitent appeal for someone's forgiveness, and why some of the other strange white men found so much difficulty in clearing their throats. Out in the dark jungle once more the bell bird struck a single mournful note; but this time it sounded like a requiem for the dead.

### HEART CURRENTS

IT has been definitely proved that when a human muscle contracts an electric current flows in it. The positive end is the passive end, and the negative the active. As a muscle contracts by means of a contractual wave, and as when this wave passes the median line of the muscle the active end becomes passive, and vice versa, so the current reverses in direction.

Now, the heart is a big muscle, and contracts at every beat. So if we can attach a wire to the base of the heart and one to the apex, and connect the two by a galvanometer (an electric current detector), we shall get part of the current through it. The current will be an alternating current. This has now been actually done by connecting with the right hand (corresponding to the base of the heart) and the left foot (corresponding to the apex of the heart).

The main facts in the case have been known for twenty-five years; but the application has arrived only with the invention of Einthoven's string galvanometer, an instrument so delicate that it can vibrate many times a second, and by means of which the actual picture of the quality of an alternating current can be made. The recording part of the device is a tiny mirror attached to the vibrating wire, from which a spot of light is reflected on a moving photographic film. In this form it is called an oscillograph. So a record may be made of a normal heart movement, and then one of a diseased heart's movement, and the two compared. It will eventually be possible to take a picture of this action and tell by the character of the curve the particular part that is out of order. The study of this phase of medicine is called electrocardiography.

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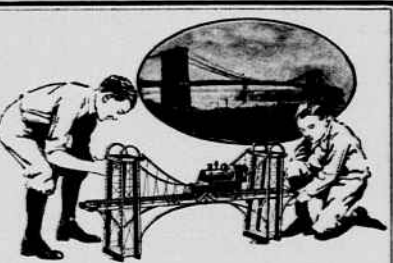
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